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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Subject: "Meat Inspectors See Everything" Information from Office of Marketing Services, War Food Administration.

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Every one knows that meat supplies for civilians are light right now, mainly because meat orders for military needs have to jump to keep up with the tremendous action and forward movements of our Armies and Navies. That's common knowledge.

Something that may not be so familiar is the fact that buyers for the Armed Forces are also limited in shopping for meat. To be on the safe side, men who buy meat for our soldiers and sailors must place their orders only in plants that operate under Federal inspection.

Thousands of cattle and hogs are butchered on farms or in small plants that can't meet the rigid requirements necessary for Federal inspection. The meat may be wholesome to eat, but the Government can't take a chance. "Seeing is believing", they say, and to meat inspectors that means seeing everything every day. According to national legislation, meat that is butchered in a plant without Federal inspection can be sold only in the state where the meat is butchered, except under special provision. In that case the people of that state are responsible for inspection laws. But in interstate commerce Federal standards must be observed. So you see, the number of places where the Government can buy meat for the men in the service is limited. Since that is the case, military meat orders come first, of course -- ahead of yours and other civilians who are accustomed to buying Federally inspected meat.

From long experience meat buyers have discovered the value of inspecting meat, both before the animal is slaughtered and afterwards. As far back as 1890--over 50 years ago -- men in the meat business recognized that meat would be more wholesome -- safer to eat -- if the cows and hogs, as well as sheep were examined for

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disease. Little by little inspection standards have been raised, until today a meat packing plant that meets the Federal requirements would deserve praise from the very best of housekeepers. When a plant is equipped with good lighting and ventilation, efficient screening, water supply and many other provisions for sanitation that's only the beginning, the preparation for efficient work.

Inspection starts when the animals enter the pens preparatory to slaughtering. The men who look the animals over for signs of sickness are experienced veterinarians. If they spot an animal with sure symptoms of disease the animal is tagged "U.S. Condemned", and locked up for disposal. Sometimes animals that don't seem perfectly normal are marked "U.S. Suspect". Then they are separated from the others and kept under observation till the inspectors diagnose the trouble, if any.

Trained inspectors are on hand at every step in the process of slaughtering, watching for any sign that would indicate possible infection in the meat. They know where the danger zones usually are, and examine with special care the head and vital organs of an animal. Inspection doesn't stop with slaughtering. Until the meat leaves the packing plant -- whether it is smoked, canned or made into cold cuts, inspectors are on the job to check for sanitation and purity. One of the large meat packing plants in the United States keeps 9 veterinarians and 32 assistants busy guarding their products from any contamination.

Meat inspectors are trained and paid by the Department of Agriculture as a safety policy for the protection of the people. At present approximately 350 towns and cities have meat packing plants that operate under Federal inspection. That means that buyers for the Armed Forces must place their orders in these plants, And if your butcher too, is particular about buying from Federally inspected plants you will probably realize more keenly than ever this spring that you are sharing your meat with the boys overseas. But you can console yourself with the knowledge that meat you eat and the meats our Armies get bear the big purple stamp of protection which reads, "U.S. Inspected and Passed".

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